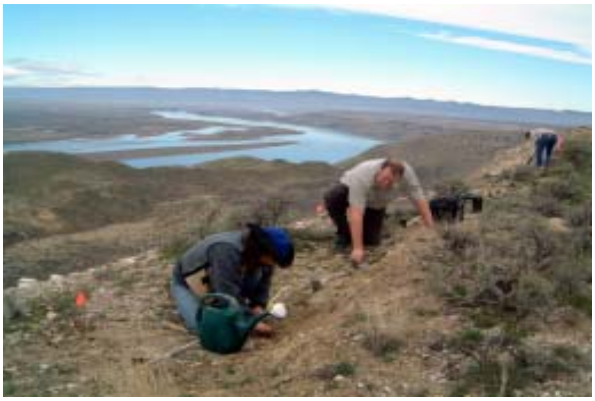
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Hanford Reach National Monument
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge
. . . protecting the last of the free-flowing Columbia River.

Planting Aids Sensitive Species at Hanford Reach

During the initial stages of a biodiversity inventory and analysis of the Hanford site, conducted from 1994 to 1999 by the Nature Conservancy of Washington, botanist Florence Caplow and her team identified plant species found nowhere else on Earth. Two species, the White Bluffs Bladderpod *(Lesquerella tuplashensis)* and the Umtanum Desert Buckwheat *(Eriogonum codium)*, have been the focus of a recent revegitation effort by Caplow and the staff of Hanford Reach National Monument.



As the name implies, the White Bluffs Bladderpod grows on cliffs high above the Columbia River. It survives in a narrow band, only feet from the cliff's edge. In order to determine that it is a distinct species, and not a variant of a similar mustard found below the cliffs near the river, Caplow collected seed two years ago and had them grown out at the Rainshadow Native Plant Nursery in Ellensburg, Washington. After analysis, it was confirmed that it is indeed a separate species. The seedlings were transported in March from Ellensburg to the White Bluffs for transplant. A site was located along the cliff's edge, free of indigenous Bladderpods, yet containing the exposed calcite soil layer that it requires for survival. Fifty two seedlings were planted and will be monitored in years ahead for survival and rate of growth.

Across the Hanford site, on a high saddle of Umtanum Ridge, another unique species, the Umtanum Desert Buckwheat, clings in clumps close to the ground, covering a localized area receiving some of the highest winds on the Monument. This population of approximately 5000 plants has been studied over the past few years and has been found to be in decline. It has also been impacted by recent wilfires that have swept Umtanum Ridge. Caplow collected and germinated the tiny seeds, and carefully planted them in flagged test sites on the ridge. They will be monitored for success and if any growth is found, future seed planting may occur.